

## How fucked am I? (/v/AskVoat/2516123) (AskVoat (/v/AskVoat))

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submitted 16 hours ago by Antiseed117 (/user/Antiseed117)

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[–] kvakk (/user/kvakk) 2 points (+2|-0) 10.2 hours ago (edited 9 minutes ago)

I've had a partly herniated disc once (or some stage towards it) making me almost incapable of getting out of bed, incapable of laying in bed without extreme pain, incapable of sleeping for more than an hour continuously. So I will describe it very briefly.

It originated from a bad sitting posture where I'd been sliding somewhat down in an office chair, so lower back became angled and suspended between seat and back rest. That put a pressure on it. I know this was the cause because I noticed weak stings in the back that made me straighten up, several times during the weeks leading up to the full onset. One afternoon after such incident I did some very light weight deadlift exercise, just 30kg, as I thought I should start to strengthen my back up to prevent these pains and to easier keep a better sitting posture. Well that was obviously a very bad timing to do such a thing, as it triggered the herniation. I can't remember 100% but I think the pain occurred somewhat during the exercise, making me stop, but then full fledged during the night or next morning.

So here is what I did, with no medication and no doctors visit :

### 1) Posture :

I stopped sitting and got an elevated office desk so I could stand working. The best spine position is when standing. Alternatively I think sitting on the very front edge of the chair with a straight back is the next best thing. Back pain is very common among people sitting a lot, like truck drivers etc. I believe most herniations are due to long term bad postures and incremental micro-tears in the disc, rather than the final typically somewhat moderate/normal event that inevitably pushes it into the symptomatic/pain stage. The posture must be fixed to give the correct balanced forces on the disk, to stop pressuring it out, and to keep it in the right shape/position it needs to heal. This is required, but it's likely not alone sufficient to reverse a herniation.

### 2) Invert :

The second equally important thing I did was to invert. Why? The herniated disk is not broken. It has several internal layers/sheets, a bit like an onion, and some inner sheets may have started to tear, and it's starting to slightly bulge out. But it will repair itself over time if you give it the conditions to do so. If you stretch the spine, the disk will be sucked in, instead of being pressured out. You create a vacuum inside the disk as you pull on it from top and bottom. This pulls the sides inwards. Exactly what you need when it's trying to do the opposite. If you stay inverted, meaning hanging from your feet or legs with the head and torso down, you create this vacuum. It will feel instantly pain relieving. How long it will last and how often you must do it depends on your level of herniation and how well you keep your posture (ideally standing) in between. I did it perhaps 3-5 times a day. Slowly the disk will repair it's layers from the inside and strengthen in it's proper position which you are forcing it to maintain. You probably should do this for several weeks, maybe longer. Inversion is much more effective than hanging from your hands, because the upper body is like 70% by weight, so you get more than twice the pull force on the lumbar discs. You could theoretically load some weight on your legs while hanging from arms, but you will not be able to keep that position for long. Inverted you can stay like 10-30 minutes. And you really need a minimum of 5-10 minutes each session, because the discs take a bit of time to expand.

For inversion I advice buying an **inversion table**. I will not recommend any brand here, so people may think it's a sales pitch, but you can PM me if you like an opinion of which seems good. But probably any of them will do the job. Personally I actually didn't buy one. I arranged a setup with some stiff cushions at a sharp incline off the back of a sofa, hanging from my knees. But it was quite complicated to get into and out of position, so a proper inversion table will be much more convenient and allows more consistent and long term use. And you need to get a pulling force on the legs or pelvis, not just being inverted obviously.

This stuff works because the disk is quite slow to compress and expand. This is a fact and can be tested by measuring your height just after you wake up. I'm about 1.5cm taller when I wake up than in the evening. Within an hour maybe I compress about 0.5cm, another 0.5cm over a few hours, and the last 0.5cm over the rest of the day. This indicates indeed that the disks are slow to compress. And I guess this is the cycle you tap into with the above method.

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When inverted I noticed you can reach some kind of threshold where you suddenly feel that your back is letting go and expanding. If you really relax, focus on slow breathing and on relaxing of all the tiny muscles around your spine, after a little while you will actually feel the muscles let go and that the spine is really expanding.

So. Do those two things, and I think you should get instant pain relief, and be symptom free probably within weeks. Still I advice at least 6 months or 1 year before starting to lift weights, like deadlift, if that's on your plan. I don't know how long it takes for these disks to regain their full strength again, or if they ever will be. But they should at least be strong enough for normal living, and after some time moderate lifting.

Good article : The benefits of spinal decompression (<http://www.simplebackpain.com/benefits-of-spinal-decompression.html#axzz2xRibSQfe>)

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